
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

Submitted by: Commissioners Hicks / McIntyre / Upton

Finding: Building codes within the Tahoe Basin have generally been updated and modified by State and local authorities to require fire safe construction materials. However, many existing structures in the Tahoe Basin do not meet current building codes and standards relating to fire safety. Consequently, there is a need to require the retrofitting of such structures to make them safer from the hazards of catastrophic fire within the Basin.

Background and Supporting Evidence:

The risks of fire within the wildland urban interface have clearly been identified by State and local governments, and serious efforts have been undertaken by the building and public safety agencies of such authorities to address building codes and related requirements in such areas. An example of this effort is the recent publication by Cal-Fire of "Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Products". Local authorities in the Tahoe Basin have generally addressed new construction or substantial remodels of existing structures, but generally have not addressed the retrofitting of existing structures to meet current requirements for new construction or substantial remodels. For example, most local authorities no longer allow wood shake or shingle roofs to be installed on buildings within the Tahoe Basin. However, notwithstanding the implementation of these requirements for new construction or roof replacements, there are thousands of structures within the Tahoe Basin having wood shake or shingle roofs.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that all local governmental authorities in the Tahoe Basin having jurisdiction and control over buildings and structures, including the various fire agencies located within the Tahoe Basin, adopt suitable ordinances requiring the retrofitting of existing structures within the Tahoe Basin to meet modern fire standards suitable for use in wildland urban interface areas. In particular, it is recommended that all buildings presently existing in the Tahoe Basin that have wood shake or shingle roofs be required to replace existing roofs with roofing materials that are ignition resistant and suitable for use within wildland urban interface areas.
2. It is recommended that the local governments, with the assistance of the Tahoe Basin Fire Chiefs and any Basin-wide Fire Safe Council or other organization formed to address fire safety matters in the Basin, pursue any grant or loan programs that may be available to assist property owners in retrofitting their residences to meet these requirements.

Impacts of Implementation: *(The implementation of any Recommendation is likely to have specific impacts. Consider potential consequences related to each of the following areas):*

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is REQUIRED (Best Estimate):

- ☐ Cost / The costs of such retrofitting requirements will be very high, and will be borne by property owners unless grants or loan programs can be found. It is not possible to estimate the costs of such retrofit requirements.
- ☐ Funding source / Presently, there are no funding sources other than the personal funds of affected property owners.
- ☐ Staffing / Not applicable
- ☐ Existing regulations and/or laws / This action will require adoption of suitable laws and ordinances by the relevant local authorities.
- ☐

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Analysis of impacts on the following factors is OPTIONAL:

- ☐ Operational
- ☐ Social
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Policy
- ☐ Health and Safety
- ☐ Environmental
- ☐ Interagency

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